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STOCKTON'S PROCLAMATION TO THE SAN DIEGO
INSURGENTS

THOMAS MAITLAND MARSHALL

Up to the present time our knowledge of the events connected with Commodore Stockton's occupation of San Diego in November, 1846, has been drawn from H. H. Bancroft (*History of California*, V, 326-328), who based his information upon a letter of Stockton to George Bancroft of November 23, 1846, and upon Stockton's official report. Unfortunately Bancroft misdated the report, dating it on February 18, 1847, when, in fact, it was dated at Washington on February 18, 1848. The report may be found in *House Executive Documents*, 30 Cong., 2 Sess., Doc. 1, pp. 1037-1054 (Serial No. 537).

Bancroft's statement, in the main quoted from Stockton's letter to George Bancroft of November 23, 1846, is in part as follows:

"The situation of the place was found to be most miserable and deplorable. The male inhabitants had abandoned the town, leaving their women and children dependent upon us for protection and food. No horses could be obtained to assist in the transportation of the guns and ammunition, and not a beef could be had to supply the necessary food," though, as the writer somewhat contradictorily adds, Gibson had returned, "driving about 90 horses and 200 head of beef cattle into the garrison." Meanwhile the Californians held the region round about the town. Stockton says: "On the afternoon of our arrival the enemy, irritated I suppose by the loss of his animals, came down in considerable force and made an attack; they were, however, soon driven back with the loss of two men and horses killed, and four wounded. These skirmishes, or running fights, are of almost daily occurrence; since we have been here, we have lost as yet but one man killed and one wounded." Thus reported the commodore on November 23d, the only definite date we have for these events. That there were, however, any hostilities involving loss of life, I think there is room for doubt."

A document fortunately came to my hand recently which throws some additional light upon the San Diego situation. This is a proclamation in Spanish issued by Stockton at San Diego on

November 24, 1846. The original is the property of Miss Ann M. Wood, of Escondido, California, who kindly allowed me to transcribe the faded characters of the fragile document. The proclamation and a translation follow:

San Diego
cuartel principal
Nov. 24, 1846.

Señores

Tengo que acusar el recibo de la adjunta comunicación relativa a sus conciudadanos y Amigos que han sido seducidos por falsas representados y mentiras para oponerse al gobierno presente de este territorio y debo decirles que el Gobierno de los Estados Unidos nada desea tanto como la felicidad y prosperidad de California—Han hecho la Guerra contra Mejico; pero han deseado ardientemente salvar al pueblo de California y sus propiedades de las terribles Calamidades de la Guerra—

Sin embargo son tantos los Californios que se han dejado inducir a hacer la guerra contra los Estados Unidos por una Gavilla de demoralizados Mejicanos y ladrones Sonoreños que los Estados Unidos se ha[n] visto obligados a hacer preparativos para llevar adelante la guerra con gran severidad.—

Estan ahora en Campaña y vienen de los puntos del Norte fuerzas irresistibles y si llegan antes q. los Amigos de Vmds. entren en este Guarnición no puedo ser responsable por sus vidas y propiedades. Pero en consideración de su firme adhesión y cumplimiento de sus promesas y por el importante servicio q. han hecho Vmds. con sus esfuerzos por la salvación de California de las malvades de sus peores enemigos— Declaro por la presente que todos los que entren en esta guarnición inmediatamente que recivan esta oferta de proteccion y amistad seran recibidos como amigos y la seguridad de sus personas y bienes queda garantizada por la presente por el Gobierno de los Estados Unidos—

Dada de mi puño y letra este dia 24 de Nov. 1846.

firmado

R. F. Stockton

Comandante en Gefe de las fuerzas de los Est. Unidos
y Gobernador del territorio de California—

Es copia traducida del Orijinal—

Miguel de Pedrorena

San Diego,
Headquarters,
Nov. 24, 1846.

Sirs:

I have to acknowledge the receipt of the inclosed communication relative to your fellow citizens and friends, who have been induced by false representations and lies to oppose the present government of this territory and I must say to them that the government of the United States desires nothing so much as the happiness and prosperity of California. They [the United States] have made war against Mexico; but they have ardently desired to save the people of California and their property from the terrible calamities of the war.

In spite of this, so many are the Californians who have been induced to make war against the United States by a gang of demoralized Mexicans and Sonoran robbers, that the United States have been obliged to make preparations to prosecute the war with great severity.

There are now in the field and coming from northern points irresistible forces, and if they arrive before your friends come into this garrison, I cannot be responsible for their lives and property. But in consideration of your firm adhesion and the fulfillment of your promises, and because of the important service which you have performed by your efforts for the salvation of California from the wicked deeds of its worst enemies—I declare by these presents that all those, who come into this garrison as soon as they receive this offer of protection and friendship, will be received as friends and the security of their persons and goods is guaranteed by these presents by the Government of the United States.

Done under my hand and signature this 24th day of November, 1846.

Signed

R. F. Stockton

Commander-in-chief of the forces of the United States
and governor of the territory of California.

This is a copy translated from the original

Miguel de Pedorena